

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### CEPS Inc

#### New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### New Hampshire MEP Helps CEPS, Inc. 'Break the Mold'

##### Client Profile:

CEPS, Inc. manufactures plastic injection molded components and sub assemblies used in industry as well as the life sciences, medical diagnostic and analytical lab equipment markets. At their headquarters in West Lebanon, New Hampshire the company currently employs 13 people.

##### Situation:

CEPS, Inc. was approached by Jane T. Ely of the New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NH MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, with an invitation to attend some Lean training events. When the opportunity for grant assistance from the Workforce Opportunity Council came about, CEPS' president Jim Umland approached the NH MEP for grant training.

##### Solution:

NH MEP conducted the Principles of Lean Manufacturing for Job Shops (LE102), a basic lean training, for all CIPS employees. Ely then provided instruction in Value Stream Mapping (VSM), a procedure used to map out a process and to identify waste, to a group of six employees. The entire staff was divided into three, six-person teams. Each team had two of the VSM-trained employees on it and was assigned a specific objective. One team addressed workplace organization. The second group studied the way parts are handled from the time they come out of the injection molding machine through inventory and then shipping. The third group focused on mold changeover and machine set-up times. These were cross functional teams with employees from various areas of the company so that they could look at the issues from different points of view and expertise levels.

A year of work with the NH MEP culminated with a week-long shutdown of the plant to clean and make changes and improvements. Work stations were rearranged to improve flow, and storage issues were addressed to provide more room for growth. This resulted in a more efficient, safer and cleaner work environment. Capital improvements were also made during this week to enhance the process. "The impact on morale, increased communication, and employee input has made the changes stick and be sustainable," added Umland.

##### Results:

- \* Increased sales by 17 percent.
- \* Included in Inc. Magazine's 2008 list of the USA's 5,000 fastest growing companies.

##### Testimonial:

"Jane Ely and the staff from the New Hampshire MEP are a very professional group. The biggest benefit (to CEPS) was in the education and knowledge transfer. New Hampshire MEP is also very resourceful and put us in touch with opportunities through the Business and Industry Association and the Governor's office, and introduced us to the New England Trade Adjustment Assistance Center, an

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organization that helps companies compete with imports."

Mr. James Umland, President